The Center for Local Government Board of Directors Meeting

November 3, 2021

1:30pm – 3pm

CLG Offices (4015 Executive Park Dr. Suite 226, Cincinnati, OH 45241) or Virtual

In attendance: Mike Rahall (Virtual), Jack Cameron (Virtual), Vicky Earhart (Virtual), Kristen Bitonte (Phone) (Board); T.J. White (Staff)

Absent: Jim Lukas (Board); Cody Smith (Staff)

* The meeting was called to order at 1:32pm
* September 8, 2021 board meeting minutes
  + Motion to approve by M. Rahall. Seconded by J. Cameron. Motion carried 4-0
* Discussion on CLG Membership Dues
  + T. White stated that at the September Board meeting, there was discussion as to whether the cost of membership was too high. There was also discussion about the fact that CLG had a cash reserve of over $190,000. The Board requested a breakdown of membership by program participation and by length of time. This could be used to identify ways to reduce membership dues potentially.
  + T. White provided this analysis to the Board shortly after the September meeting. In preparation for the November meeting, he brainstormed possible solutions. He analyzed member participation, and developed a “participation score” based around shared services, information sharing, training, and Leadership Academy participation. Governments who had been in the membership for more than 10 years had the highest participation scores. Governments who had been in the membership less than 5 years had the lowest scores.
  + T. White had three ideas to open up the membership dues brainstorming. The first was not directly dues related: Free Annual Meeting attendance to one person per government. The second proposal was for 2-step dues, where new members would see their dues pro-rated in the first year, and at 75% level in their second year. And finally, a program participation incentive, where members get a dues reduction based on their program participation levels. Each of these ideas had plusses and minuses, with the minuses all having to do with fairness- some members may not be eligible for programs that other members are receiving discounts for.
  + K. Bitonte asked if this stemmed from feedback from the membership. J. Cameron stated that this came out of discussion about CLG’s healthy cash reserve, combined with the fact that membership dues may be a detriment to new members joining.
  + J. Cameron proposed a discount by membership length, in 0-5, 5-10, and 10+ year increments. This would be much simpler than discounts based on participation levels. V. Earhart agreed that we should try to keep any proposal simple. V. Earhart asked if this would be for one year or multiple years.
  + T. White proposed a simple 10% across the board cut for all members for one year. This would cost roughly $18,960. J. Cameron stated that would be a more simple approach.
  + K. Bitonte proposed language where we thank governments for their membership, and recognized that in light of Covid-19, finances have been difficult for certain communities.
  + MOTION by J. Cameron to provide a 10% membership dues reduction for all CLG members for one year in 2022. V. Earhart seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-0.
* 2022 Center for Local Government Budget
  + T. White stated that the 2022 CLG budget projected a dip of $8,900 into the cash reserve, but in reality, there was only a $1,800 dip. This is because of higher than expected membership renewals and lower than expected personnel costs.
  + The 2022 budget as proposed dips into the cash reserve in the amount of $8,400. The budget assumes full membership renewal, a 3% raise for personnel (based on actual spend from 2021, not budgeted spend), an increase of $600 in CLG operating expenses, and an increase of $900 in contract services.
  + In addition to operating, the Leadership Academy will cost $15,500- to be paid for by a combination of tuition and grants. He proposed (although this is not in the budget document), that CLG could expand the Academy for one year to clear the 5 person wait list. J. Cameron stated that it may be better to see how registrations go first, and then make a decision on that.
  + M. Rahall asked why Hamilton did not rejoin. T. White stated that he reached out to Hamilton on multiple occasions but did not get a response. He would try again however.
  + T. White stated that the motion to reduce membership dues by 10% will have a budgetary impact of $18,960. He stated that he will amend the draft budget accordingly, and e-mail it to the Board for discussion and a vote.
  + V. Earhart asked if the intention was to conduct discussion and debate via e-mail as well. T. White said yes, but a Zoom or meeting can be arranged if necessary.
* CLG Annual Meeting Review
  + T. White stated that 69 people signed up for the Annual Meeting, which is a 5-10 person increase from previous years. He asked the Board their opinions on holding a fall Annual Meeting again in 2022.
  + V. Earhart liked the Leadership Academy being prominently featured. She proposed continuing with the fall meeting, but perhaps hosting a more informal “Spring Luncheon” as well.
  + J. Cameron said that Thane Maynard and Montgomery Inn are a draw. He also liked the idea of holding the Leadership Academy graduation at the Annual meeting.
* Program Updates
  + T. White provided brief updates on programs in development:
    - CLG staff is researching benchmark bids on the proposed solar program. The next step will be to continue follow-up with governments as they conduct feasibility studies.
    - The Police Officers from the JUFS governments saw a live demonstration of the Streetsmarts VR training system. There will be a meeting on November 9th to make a final decision on what system to purchase.
    - CLG is no longer pursuing the data backup RFP project.
* Membership renewals
  + T. White stated that CLG has received Fairfield’s membership dues, and will make another attempt at reaching out to Hamilton. T. White also stated that he will reach out to New Lebanon at the suggestion of the Brookville City Manager.
* The meeting adjourned at 2:20pm.